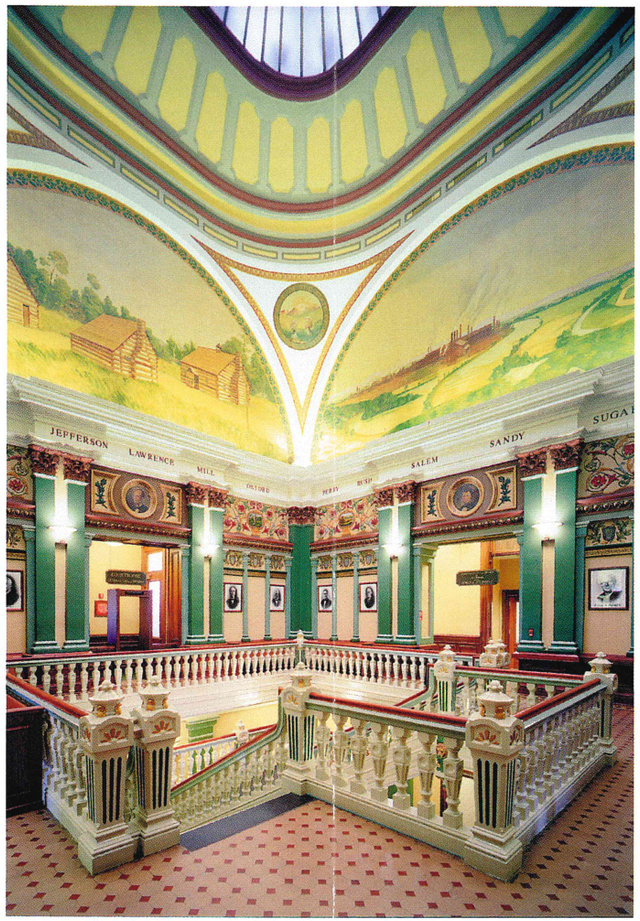
1995-96 Renovation

During 1995 and 1996, renovation was completed of the 1882 courthouse, with design help from Fisher and Associates Architects Inc. The emphasis was to restore the building to its original splendor. The wood trim was stripped to its original black walnut color, the ceramic tile floors were cleaned and repaired, the ceilings were raised to the original 14' height and the walls were painted using historic Victorian color schemes. A canvas mural depicting Lady Justice, complete with scales and sword, was discovered beneath a lowered ceiling. It was restored and framed and is on display in Courtroom 301.



The murals on the rotunda walls depict historical scenes in the county...

... A steel mill (*East wall*).

... Ox-drawn farm equipment and gasoline powered equipment (*West wall*).

... Pioneers arriving in covered wagons (*South wall*).

... Cabins which housed the pioneers (*North wall*).

The rotunda also features four painted portraits, which were labeled during the renovation and are:

Colonel Mathias Bartilson
Former Tuscarawas County Prosecuting Attorney and a Civil War colonel. (*South wall*)

Robert Hunter Nugent
Former superintendent to the Ohio-Erie Canal, member of the U. S. House of Representatives as well as delegate to the Democratic National Convention in 1860. (*East wall*)

George W. McIlvaine
Former mayor of New Philadelphia, Tuscarawas County Common Pleas Judge and Ohio Supreme Court Justice. (*North wall*)

Charles H. Mitchener
Former local attorney, and co-founder of a local newspaper "The Ohio Democrat." (*West wall*)

The Tuscarawas County Court of Common Pleas Judges *Welcome You!*

Tuscarawas County Common Pleas General Trial Division Judges

Michael J. Ernest

Ryan Styer

• • •

Tuscarawas County Common Pleas Probate and Juvenile Division Judge

Adam W. Wilgus

• • •

101 East High Avenue
New Philadelphia, Ohio 44663

• • •

For tour information
contact
330-365-3299 or
dunfee@co.tuscarawas.oh.us

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Photos courtesy of
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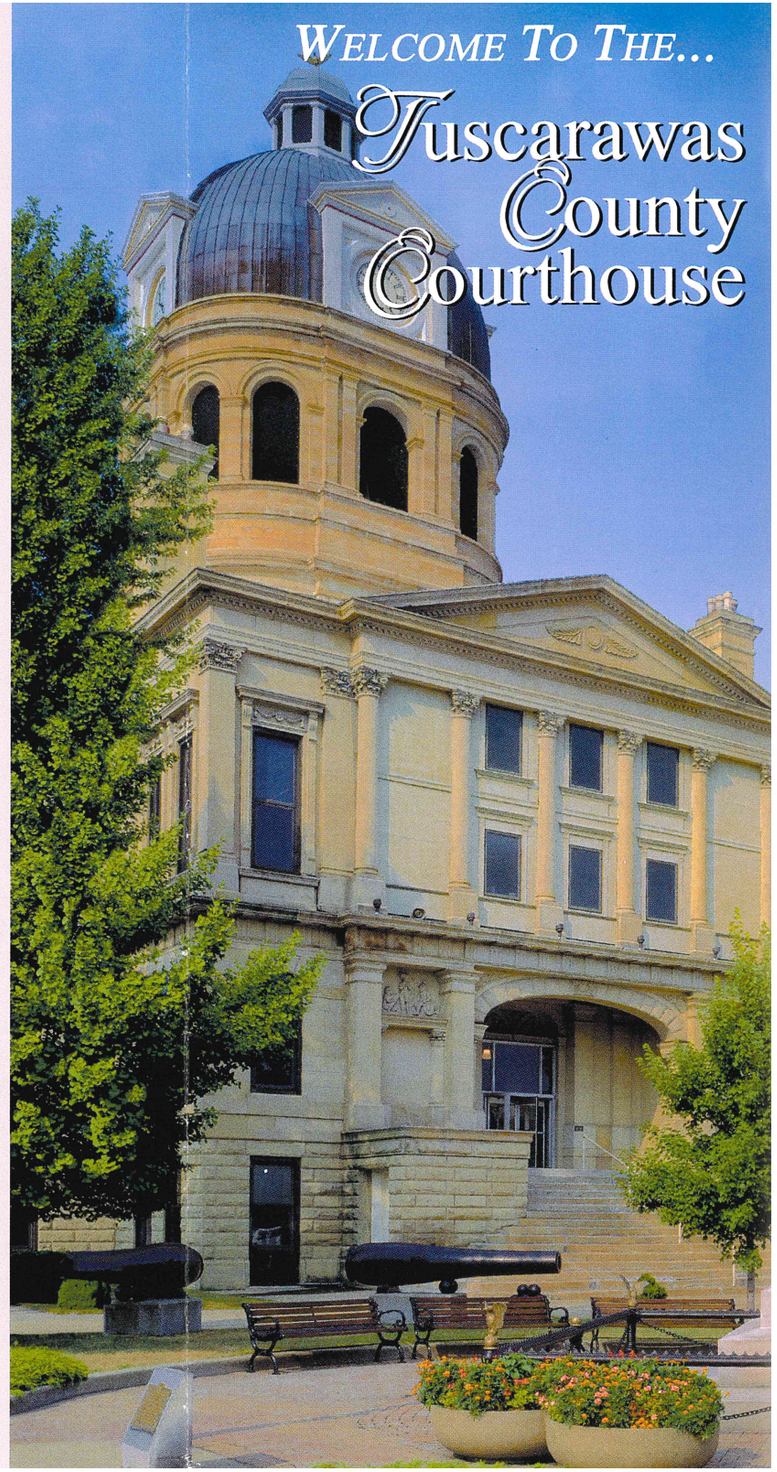
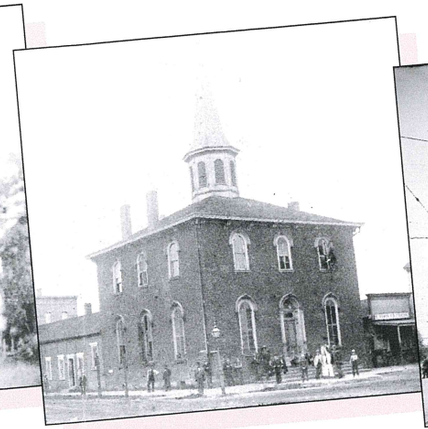
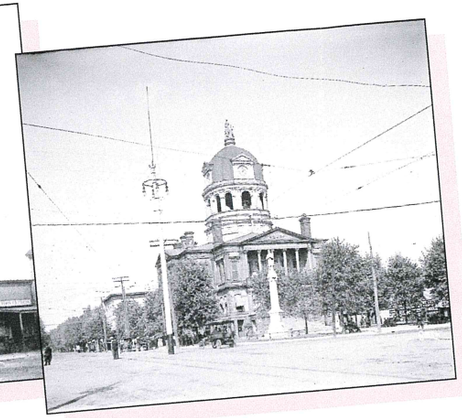
Historical Society







Tuscarawas County and its Courthouses...

Founded in 1808

On March 15, 1808, Tuscarawas County became the 27th county to be officially recognized by the State of Ohio. Early meetings of the county officials were held in a local tavern. On June 28, 1808 the County Commissioners authorized the building of a two-story structure with a jail on the first floor and county offices on the second. A contract for this log building, which also served as a church, was given to Peter Minnich for $1,500. It was 30' by 40' and was constructed on lots provided by New Philadelphia founder John Knisely.

Second Courthouse

In 1818, the county had outgrown the building and the Commissioners advertised for a new building. It was not completed for seven years and the contracts totaled $7,468. When the 1825 Commissioners had financial difficulties, they rented an upstairs room in the building to the Masonic Lodge #59 for $12 per year. The architecture of the building was like that of the old state capital building in Chillicothe. Most of the first floor was used as the courtroom. The Clerk and the Auditor each had one office also on the first floor. The second floor had a separate room for juries. The building was renovated in 1837 after fire damage, and the courtroom occupied the entire first floor post renovation.

Third Courthouse

In 1882, the county's third courthouse was designed by architect Thomas Boyd and built by T.B. Townsend of Zanesville for a contract price of $98,860. Townsend purchased the old building from the county for $900 and used the bricks for fill material for under the new building. On October 25, 1882 the cornerstone was laid after a parade longer than two miles which converged on the Public Square. Over 10,000 people attended the cornerstone laying ceremony. The stone for the building was from a quarry in Medina, causing a special railroad track to be built to the site of the courthouse. The building was 96' by 112' and consisted of 38 rooms on three floors and an attic. This courthouse was constructed with a dome with a statue of three women made from zinc or lead-like metal weighing more than 699 pounds and was 10' wide. It was called the Three Ladies of Justice and had to be removed for safety reasons in 1959. The heads of these ladies are on display in the Commissioners' Board Room. Topping the dome today is a cupola which was lifted into place by a helicopter on July 26, 1973. Currently the courthouse building houses the courtrooms and administrative offices of Judge Michael J. Ernest, Judge Ryan Styer and Judge Adam W. Wilgus. The courthouse is on the National Register of Historic Buildings.

The Weathervane

The second county courthouse was adorned by a weathervane in the shape of a fish on top of a ball on a long red rod, known as the "weatherfish." Upon removing the weathervane to construct the third courthouse, large holes were discovered in the ball portion which were believed to have been caused by celebrating Civil War veterans during their returning home parade and celebration.

The Clock

The 1882 Courthouse houses an 1888 Seth Thomas clock with solid brass gears. It is 8' tall and has a 225 pound solid cast iron pendulum. The faces on the portions showing outside are 6' in diameter and are made of glass 1" thick. The clock has to be wound once a week with the help of a small motor. The bell is rung by a hammer.

County Office Building

On October 27, 1990, the Tuscarawas County Office Building, adjacent to the courthouse, was opened to the public for its dedication and open house. The building was designed by MKC Associates Inc. and has a total of 54,500 square feet. The land was obtained by the county after a fire destroyed the existing buildings on the lot.

Monuments in the Courtyard...

Kaldenbaugh Statue: (*Statue facing square*)
Major Henry Kaldenbaugh served in the 51st infantry division in the Civil War, and left a bequest in his will for the construction of the monument to honor GAR (Union) soldiers.

Cannons/Cannon Balls: (*Between stairs and N. Broadway*)
These are original cannons that were used during the Civil War. Round knobs on the cannons enable them to sit on a cradle. When in the cradle, the cannons can point to different elevations and move in different directions. The cannon balls are authentic.

Doughboy: (*Directly in front of the courthouse*)
This is a World War I statue. He is holding a grenade in his hand.

WWII & Korean Conflict: (*By the Board of Elections*)
This monument is to commemorate the WWII and Korean Conflict.

Vietnam Veterans Memorial:
(*Directly in front of entrance to County Office Building*) This memorial commemorates the Vietnam War and those killed during service. Listed are those in this county that were killed during service. There is a separate wall for each division of service.

Desert Storm Memorial:
(*Monument closest to East High Ave.*)
This memorial commemorates the Desert Storm conflict also known as the Gulf War.

POW/MIA Memorial:
(*Monument located near the Courthouse stairs*)
This monument, featuring an empty chair, is in memory of all unaccounted American soldiers.

Congressional Medal of Honor Recepients Memorial:
(*Monument is on East side of main Courthouse stairs*) This monument commemorates Congressional Medal of Honor recipients from all wars who were from Tuscarawas County.

Revolutionary War Memorial:
(*Monument is beside main Courthouse stairs, near the Congressional Medal of Honor Memorial*)
This memorial is to commemorate the Revolutionary War.